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LEAD WITH LOVE: EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP STYLES IN MODERN MANAGEMENT

~ *Kundan Mishra*

Leadership has existed ever since any particular social group came into existence. Here, it is important to note that a group differs from a gathering; a group is that which, by some shared goals and interests, is interdependent. Such existence of leadership can be traced back to history, for instance, during the Vedic age, leaders in terms of family heads called Kulap or Kulapati, village heads as Gramani, head of multiple villages as Vispati and so on, with Rajan being the head of the larger unit. A leader, as the term suggests, leads, takes the initiative. He/She is the torchbearer. He/She has the ability to influence the group and its members. But, as the challenges, circumstances, and goals evolved, the definition of leadership also broadened.

In classical management, the sole focus was outcome-based, with efficiency, productivity and control being the pillars of profitability within the organisations. Technological advancement, globalisation and as a result growing interconnectedness have changed these focal points. While classical management, which was the heartbeat of the industrial revolution, was based mostly on blue-collar jobs, asking out of its employees, physical labour, vitality and vigour of muscular strength, times have changed drastically, rather transformed. Today, when the world is throbbing with so many cultural and colourful complexities, from men being on their hands and feet toiling in scorching heat, we've come a long way. **Computers, creativity, AI and language models, the question of mental health, of inclusivity in terms of diverse cultures, genders and generations,** modern management has divergent factors to take care of. The demand now is not for how hard you can toil, but how smart and quick you can be. **Modern management is the era of ideas.**

So, in this modern management, what styles make one an ideal leader, the one that suits, befits these transformed times?

1. **The Dhoni Style:** Popular as the “Captain-cool”, it's his cool-headedness and calmness that leaders should imbibe. Trusting your teammates, your employees, trusting them, empowering them with decision-making authorities, thus letting them own their job as a grand mission that aligns with their ambitions and growth. His leadership style is a **blend of transformational, democratic, and servant leadership**, with a touch of situational awareness.
2. **Democratic and Participative Style:** Every nook and corner of the organisation is bubbling with creative ideas and constructive suggestions, thus the leadership should adopt a democratic and participative style instead of always piling up their employees with rigid plans and confining them in tight restrictions. In a McKinsey podcast titled “ The building blocks of transformation: A conversation with Udit Batra”, Udit Batra, the CEO of Water Corporations, cites an instance from his professional experience, emphasising the significance of a democratic and participative style. He mentions that they recognised the five key growth areas, one of which was setting up a clinical business unit. The unit was given disproportionate resources and a free hand, wherein they did not have to consult a lot internally; they could be creative, and as a result, they brought in fantastic collaborations, growing from a single-digit grower to a double-digit grower. This platform for participation makes the employees own their work, internalise their professional goals in their personal ambitions
3. **The future-focused mindset:** With technological advancements, rising climatic turbulences, changing global order, and evolving societies, leaders ought to keep up with the changing times. Mukesh Ambani, the head of Reliance Industries, at McKinsey, mentioned that “maintaining a future-focused mindset is critical to thriving as a leader in today’s fast-changing world. “As we chase the opportunities of technology into the future, some of these opportunities become bigger than our existing opportunities. And we cannot leave them alone,” he says.”
4. **The Nurturant Style:** Developed by Prof. Sinha, the nurturant style of leadership urges the leaders to focus on nurturing their team-mates. This style enhances the role of leadership, arguing it is not confined merely to the organisation’s profitability and target attainment, but rather is very vivid and wide; a leader must also pave the way, which

shapes the personal growth of their employees. Everyone in their lives remains in pursuit of fulfilment, and a career is a viable means of achieving that fulfilment; thus, the nurturant style urges leaders to become a helping hand for their employees in this pursuit.

But is it not unfair to ask for so many things from one person, that he/she should be the paragon of perfection? The effective style of leadership in modern management begins with becoming more human. The world is plunging into mental health disorders today like never before. The pandemic of loneliness is the silent serpent, slowly creeping in, in all directions. Perhaps, the magic lies in realising that it is not that complicated. **Lead with love, joy and more compassion, everything else will naturally fall in its place.**

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